

Message Text

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S/S-O:MTANNER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 062096

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 62096 ACTION TEL AVIV INFO DAMASCUS
BEIRUT 15 MAR

QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 062096

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

AGS: PFOR, PINT, SY, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS

1. YOU SHOULD SEEK APPOINTMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH
ALLON OR MOST SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL AVAILABLE BY CLOSE OF
BUSINESS MARCH 15 TO DISCUSS THE EVOLVING LEBANESE SITUA-
TION, TO MEASURE THE DEGREE OF ISRAELI CONCERN, AND
ASCERTAIN WHAT THEIR INTENTIONS MIGHT BE.

2. YOU MAY DRAW ON EMBASSY BEIRUT REPORTING TO DESCRIBE

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THE SITUATION AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) THE MOST IMMEDIATE MILESTONE TO BE PASSED APPEARS TO BE THE RESOLUTION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ISSUE. IN MANY WAYS, IT IS A UNIQUELY LEBANESE PROBLEM AND WE THINK A GOOD DEAL OF PATIENCE WILL BE ESSENTIAL AS THE LEBANESE WORK OUT SOME FACE-SAVING FORMULA THAT WILL PROBABLY BE UNIQUELY LEBANESE.

(B) THE MOST DISTURBING OF ALL LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS HAS BEEN THE DEMORALIZATION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY AS THE DISSIDENT ELEMENTS SUCH AS THOSE LED BY LT. KHATIB HAVE APPEARED TO HAVE GAINED GREATER POWER. YET IT APPEARS THAT THE TOP ARMY LEADERSHIP, ALONG WITH AHDAB HIMSELF BUT INCLUDING YOUNGER CHRISTIAN OFFICERS, ARE DETERMINED TO ARREST THE ROT AND SOMEHOW CONTAIN THE PROBLEM POSED BY THE DISSIDENTS. IF THE POLITICAL SITUATION COULD BE TEMPORARILY STABILIZED, THE FORCES OF MODERATION AND RECONCILIATION MAY BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE EFFECTIVE.

(C) WE ARE KEEPING IN REGULAR TOUCH WITH THE SYRIANS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS ABOUT THE LEBANESE SITUATION AS IT DEVELOPS AND TO URGE SYRIAN RESTRAINT.

(D) WE ARE OF COURSE CONCERNED ABOUT THE STILL INCONCLUSIVE DRIFT OF EVENTS, IN PART BECAUSE SO MANY ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION THERE ARE UNCLEAR. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ISRAELI APPRAISAL AND ANY INDICATION OF THEIR THINKING ABOUT THEIR OWN OPTIONS.

(E) FOR THE TIME BEING, WE WANT TO REMAIN IN THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE TOUCH WITH ISRAEL AS EVENTS UNFOLD AND CONSULT ABOUT ANY DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD UNDERMINE OR THREATEN THE STABILITY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AS A WHOLE. WE WANT TO MAKE CLEAR IN PARTICULAR THAT WE EXPECT THERE WILL BE NO REPEAT NO ISRAELI MILITARY ACTION WITHOUT PRIOR DISCUSSION WITH US. KISSINGER
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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